

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
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O 262240Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

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SAN SALVADOR FOR TODMAN

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ES, NU

SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM JANUARY 26, 1978 NOON BRIEFING

THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OCCURRED TODAY IN DEPARTMENT PRESS
BRIEFING:

Q: JUST A GENERAL QUESTION ON THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA.
AND THEN, WHY DID TODMAN NOT GO? I MEAN, BEYOND THE EX-
PLANATION THAT IT WAS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS?

A: HE DIDN'T GO, QUITE FRANKLY, BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION
THERE, AND YOU KNOW WHAT THE SITUATION IS THERE. HE HAD
BEEN SCHEDULED TO MAKE A ONE-DAY FAMILIARIZATION VISIT.
WITH A GENERAL STRIKE UNDER WAY IN NICARAGUA, IT WAS
DECIDED THAT HIS VISIT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE AT ANOTHER
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TIME.

Q: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE
ASSASSINATION OF CHAMORRO RELEVANT TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF
THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA? SPECIFICALLY
SINCE THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONFUSION ABOUT WHO OWNS THE
BLOOD PLANT, WHOSE OFFICIAL SEEMED TO BE INVOLVED, OR IS

ACCUSED OF BEING INVOLVED IN THIS, DOES THE STATE DEPART-

MENT KNOW WHO OWNS THE BLOOD PLANT? AND ALSO, HAS THERE BEEN ANY MOVEMENT TO EXTRADITE PEDRO RAMOS THAT YOU KNOW OF?

A: NO, TO ANSWER THAT LAST QUESTION. INsofar AS THE GENERAL STATUS OF THE ASSASSINATION AND WHOEVER MAY BE IMPLICATED IN IT, WE UNDERSTAND THE INVESTIGATION IS CONTINUING. WE KNOW THAT FOUR NICARAGUAN SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND ARE UNDER DETENTION. ONE OF THE SUSPECTS HAS MADE STATEMENTS APPARENTLY IMPLICATING THREE OTHER PERSONS, INCLUDING DR. RAMOS. HE HAS DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIME. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO ONE HAS BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED IN THIS MATTER. WE ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE ON ANY ASPECTS INVOLVING SUPPOSED ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO (AS I REPEAT MYSELF) NO REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION. WE DO, OBVIOUSLY, HAVE AN EXTRADITION TREATY WITH NICARAGUA WHICH HAS BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE 1907. AND I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY CONJECTURE ON WHO IS INVOLVED.

Q: AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, RAMOS WAS THE MANAGER, OR ALLEGEDLY THE OWNER-MANAGER, OF THIS BLOOD PLANT, AND SOME OF THE PRESS ACCOUNTS SAID THAT SOMOZA HAD AN INTEREST IN THE BLOOD PLANT. SOME SAID HE OWNED IT. SOME SAID HE

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RENTED THE BUILDING. CAN THE EMBASSY IN MANAGUA FIND OUT WHO OWNS IT AND WHAT SOMOZA'S INTEREST IN IT IS?

A: I WILL SEE IF WE HAVE ANYTHING ON IT. I HAVE SEEN THAT CONJECTURE.

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